

LEADERSHIP STUDY 31ST OF AUGUST, 2022

“True greatness comes from serving others”

- **I will begin by emphasising the fact that there is a real spiritual contest to stop believers from using their gifts and talents for the Lord**

Jesus in His explanation of the Parable of the Sower said,

“The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble.

Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.” **(Mark 4:14-20)**

- **People in the world are highly motivated when it comes to making money**
- **However, when it comes to serving the Lord there are many things that would try and hinder us from living wholeheartedly for the Lord**

- **The Devil will continually try and minimise our service for the Lord as he tries to prevent people from coming to Christ**

The Devil will use:

- **Temptations and distractions**
- **Discouragement**
- **Trials and Challenges**
- **Opposition for our faith**
- **The pleasures of life**
- **The love of money and material things**
- **An appeal to our own self-interests, and**
- **Just the lure of this world**

To take our focus off serving the Lord

- **This is why Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few.” (Matthew 9:37)**
- **I will now look at what God considers to be true greatness in His Kingdom**
- **Jesus explained to his disciples what true greatness was after the mother of Zebedee’s two sons asked Jesus if it could be granted for them to sit on either side of Him in His Kingdom (We see this in Matthew 20:20-21)**
- **When the other ten disciples heard about this they were greatly displeased. (We see this in Matthew 20:24)**
- **Hence Jesus explained to His disciples what true greatness was like from God’s perspective**

Jesus said to His disciples,

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet is shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:25-28)

- **The pathway to greatness in God’s kingdom is serving others with our gifts and talents**
- **It is so important that we always maintain a servant’s heart especially when we are experiencing recognition and success in our life and ministry calling**

Jesus Himself also made a profound statement when He said,

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24)

- **With this in mind it is crucial that we always maintain a purity of motivation in our Christian walk and never allow money to pull our heart away from a wholehearted devotion to serving God and others with our gifts and talents**
- **Jesus is our example of what it is to serve others**
- **Before returning to His Father in heaven Jesus modelled to His disciples what true servanthood looked like**

In the gospel of John we read,

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.” **(John 13:3-5)**

So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you ^[a]know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” **(John 13:12-17)**

- **In washing the disciples’ feet Jesus was demonstrating to them that no one should ever deem it beneath their dignity to perform the most menial of tasks for others**

- **JESUS IS ALSO OUR EXAMPLE OF WHAT GREAT HUMILITY IS**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” **(Philippians 2:5-8)**

- **Though Jesus was responsible for the creation of all things and has been worshipped by the angels for all eternity, He willingly came into this world in the form of a man to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins**

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (**Galatians 6:14**)

WHY SERVING OTHERS IS SO IMPORTANT

- 1) Because as Christians we are meant to be counter cultural. In the world but not of it (That we are truly salt and light in our world)**

We are now living in a world where people are becoming more selfish and where the love of many is growing cold

The Apostle Paul wrote in relation to the times that we are now living in,

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**)

This is why the Apostle Paul also wrote,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (**Romans 12:2**)

2) Because Jesus is our role model for Christian living. He lived His life to serve others and to lay down His life as a ransom for many

Again, Jesus said, “And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:27-28)

3) Because one day we will be rewarded by Jesus for our service to Him in serving others with our gifts and talents during our time here on earth

Jesus Himself said, “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27)

4) Because serving others makes us stand out and shine for Jesus in a world in which people are becoming more and more self-centred

Having a servant heart helps to give us credibility when sharing our faith with others

Jesus Himself said,

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

5) Because true joy and purpose in life comes from wholeheartedly serving others with our gifts and talents

In Jesus' Parable of the Talents, we can see the joy that comes from being a good steward of our gifts and talents and from serving the Lord

Jesus said, “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ “His Lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.”

“He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ “His Lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Matthew 25:20-23)

Jesus also said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

True purpose and meaning in life as a Christian only comes from knowing Christ intimately and from using our spiritual gifts and talents to serve the Lord

6) Being servant hearted helps us to create a positive environment in our church fellowships and workplaces

The Psalmist wrote, “Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.” (Psalm 100:2)

7) Because without servants nothing will ever happen

People with a servant heart help to make things happen

The ability of a church to become a community changing church only happens when its members have a heart to reach out to the lost and to serve those in the community

The more people that are prepared to serve others with their gifts and talents the greater the influence a church can have in its community

A team of servants will achieve great things. Every believer has an important role to play in the body of Christ. We all need one another

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself IN LOVE.” (**Ephesians 4:16**)

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (**Romans 12:6-8**) and

8) Because a team characterized by a heart to serve others will be a happy team. What a joy it is to work together in a team where all members have a heart to serve others

SO HOW SHOULD WE LIVE OUR LIVES AS CHRISTIANS, PARTICULARLY AS LEADERS SO THAT WE ARE TRULY SALT AND LIGHT IN OUR WORLD

(As leaders we need to model to those entrusted to our care what it is to live the Christian life)

The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (**1 Timothy 4:12**)

The way that we live our lives as Christians has the greatest impact on others

With this in mind I will now finish with a few thoughts on how we should live our lives as Christians so that we can reflect the character of our Servant King Jesus

1) That as leaders we lead by example in the way that we serve others

The Apostle Peter wrote in relation to how the elders of a church should conduct themselves,

“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;” **(1 Peter 5:2-3)**

2) That we use our gifts and talents to serve others and to help others to realize their God given destinies in life

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.”
(1 Corinthians 14:12)

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the **EQUIPPING** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”
(Ephesians 4:11-13)

- 3) That we never allow ministry ambition to take our focus off living for and serving others. It is so important that we never get our sense of self worth from our ministry achievements**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**

- 4) That we look for opportunities to serve others**

That we don't always have to be asked to help when there is an obvious need that has to be met

That we have the ability to see where there is a need to be met and simply volunteer to help

That we can see the opportunities that come our way in life to show the love of Christ by our practical acts of service

(For example, helping an elderly lady to take a heavy trolley full of food down the stairs to the bottom floor)

- 5) That we are always faithful and diligent even in the little things**

Being faithful in the little things prepares us for promotion in God's Kingdom

Jesus Himself said,

“And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?” **(Luke 16:12)**

How we serve in the little things will also be the way that we conduct ourselves in the bigger things

Jesus Himself also said,

“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”
(Luke 16:10)

Our character is best revealed in how we do things when no one is looking

Do we cut corners or are we diligent and faithful in all that we do in life including the little things

6) That we give our best in all that we do when serving others with our gifts and talents

Like Daniel in the Old Testament, we need to always have a spirit of excellence in all that we do for the Lord

In the book of Daniel we read,

“Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.”
(Daniel 6:3)

Especially for those in the five-fold ministry it is good to give our best when ministering to those entrusted to our care so that we can help them to become strong in their faith and to become all that God has planned for their lives

7) That in all that we do in life we endeavour to glorify God so that others are drawn to Christ

The Psalmist wrote,

“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth.” **(Psalm 115:1)**

Towards the end of His time here on earth Jesus prayed to His Father in Heaven,

“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” **(John 17:4)**

To glorify God the Father on earth was Jesus’ express purpose

To prepare for and live in revival, it is also imperative that we always have this same desire to glorify God in all that we do

God will not share His glory with another **(Isaiah 42:8)**

For this reason, it is so important that we always seek to give glory to God in all that we do for Him as we serve Him and others with our gifts and talents

8) That we continually choose to esteem others better than ourselves

This is a great key to always having a right motivation in all that we do for the Lord and for others

It is so important that we are always others focused and look out for the interests of others as well

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” **(Philippians 2:3-4)**

9) That we daily choose to live a crucified life where it is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me

It is so crucial that we daily put to death our fleshly nature that would want to do its own thing

The world, the flesh and the Devil are all influences that can draw people away from living a life of service to God and others

In particular the Devil will continually appeal to our own self interests to try and draw us away from living whole heartedly for the Lord

This is why Jesus Himself said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.” **(Luke 9:23-24)**

10) That all that we do in serving others is always undergirded by love

The Apostle Peter wrote, “But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” **(1 Peter 4:7-10) And**

11) That we always seek to do things with enthusiasm and a right attitude

How we do things and serve others is also important

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”
(Philippians 2:14-15)

It is in living in this way that we will truly stand out as Christians in the world that we are now living in and that we will position ourselves for promotion in God’s Kingdom

I will finish with the words of Jesus,

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.” **(John 12:24-26)**